Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi vs. Ali Sina Part 2

Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi vs. Ali Sina

I am glad to inform the dear readers of FFI that Mr. Ghamidi has expressed his readiness to discuss Islam with me. I would like to thank Free Inquirer for making this debate possible and for inviting Mr. Ghamidi and myself to take part in this informative and educational dialogue. I trust this would be a very fruitful discussion. I read some of Mr. Ghamidi's articles and he has made a very positive impression on me. He is one of Pakistan's most respected scholars and I am honored that despite his busy schedule, he has accepted this invitation. Mr. Ghamidi is a man of peace and a moderate Muslim. Here is the letter of acceptance that I received from his office

Ali Sina .

From: "khalid zaheer" <kzaheer_lums @ hotmail.com>
To: religious_inquest @ yahoo.com
Subject: Mr Ghamidi's Response
Date: Thu, 14 Sep 2006 10:15:46 +0000

Dear Free Inquirer

Thank you very much for taking interest in arranging a dialogue between Mr Ghamidi and Mr Ali Sina.

First of all, we would like you to correct this fact: Mr Javed Ahmad Ghamidi has not been appointed by the Government of Pakistan to help it in interpreting Islam in a modern way. Mr Ghamidi was asked by the President of Pakistan to be a member of the Council of Islamic Ideology, which is a constitutional body that suggests responses to various issues confronting the people of Pakistan in the interpretation of the message of Islam. He accepted that offer in the spirit of informing the rulers about what he thinks is the right understanding of Islam quite the same way as he has been informing people about it in the last 35 years.

We welcome the initiative you have taken to enable Mr Ali Sina to ask Mr Ghamidi questions about of Islam that create doubts in his mind about the truthfulness of the claim that it is a message from God. Mr Ghamidi has been performing this task for the last three-and-a-half decades and there is no reason why we wouldn't want to share our research with a person like Mr Sina. However, what he doesn't want to do is to engage in a polemic which results in a senseless competition of rhetoric wherein the contestants are in reality playing a game in the garb of an academic debate. The difference

between a polemic and a serious academic exchange is that while the one is a fiercely contested debate with a clear objective to not understand and accept what is true but to defeat the opposing party, while the other engages both parties in a serious exchange of views with a view to know and acknowledge what the truth is. The participants are close-minded in the case of the former and open to truth in the case of the latter. Mr Ghamidi hates the former and welcomes the latter.

Finally, before starting this process, we would like Mr Sina to have a look at the attached pages which outline the basic approach Ghamidi Sb follows in forming his religious opinions. It is important that the sources of information he thinks are original for Islamic learning and therefore are the basis of his research should first be understood to preclude any possibility that Mr Sina demands from him explanation of information and concepts that Mr Ghamidi thinks do not belong to the original message of Islam.

After Mr Sina has gone through this message along with the attached outline of Mr Ghamidi's approach to understanding the message of Islam, we would welcome suggestions from your side to convert this opportunity into a meaningful dialogue.

Khalid Zaheer

(This message has been written in consultation with Mr Ghamidi.)

http://www.khalidzaheer.com/about.html

Dr Khalid Zaheer is an associate professor of Islamic Studies and Ethics at Lahore University of Management Science (LUMS). He has a teaching experience of more than 16 years. Prior to joining LUMS, he taught at IBA and Punjab University for 12 years as a permanent faculty member. He has also taught at various other educational institutions in Lahore. Dr. Zaheer delivers lectures in Pakistan Administrative Staff College, National Institute of Public Administration, Pakistan Audit and Accounts Training Institute, and Lahore School of Economics. Dr Zaheer's PhD dissertation focused on Interest-Free Banking. His areas of interest are Islamic banking and application of Islamic principles in contemporary business environment. He is a member of the task force constituted by the Ministry of Finance to propose measures to convert government domestic borrowing into project-related financing according to Shariah injunctions. He is also a member of the Board of Management of the Pakistan Baitul Mal. He regularly contributes articles to the monthly Renaissance, a leading religious English journal of the country. Dr. Zaheer has appeared in many television programs and has also given sermons at mosques.